

Examples of People First Language

Say:

People with disabilities
Paul has a cognitive disability (diagnosis)
Katie has autism (or a diagnosis of...)
Jose has Down syndrome (or a diagnosis of...)
Sara has a learning disability (or a diagnosis of...)
Bob has a physical disability (or a diagnosis of...)
Maria uses a wheelchair / mobility chair
Tom has a mental health condition
Ryan receives special Ed services
LaToya has a developmental delay
Children without disabilities
Communicates with her eyes / device / etc.
People we serve / provide services to
Congenital disability
Brain injury
Accessible parking, hotel room, etc.
She needs / or she uses....

Instead of:

The handicapped or disabled
He's mentally retarded
She's autistic
He's Down's; a Down's person, mongoloid
She's learning disabled
He's a quadriplegic / is crippled
She's confined to / is wheelchair bound
He's emotionally disturbed / mentally ill
He's in special Ed; is a sped student / inclusion student
She's developmentally delayed
Normal / healthy / typical kids
Is non-verbal
Client, consumer, recipient, etc.
Birth defect
Brain damaged
Handicapped parking, hotel room, etc.
She has a problem with .. / she has special needs....

Keep thinking – there are many other descriptors we need to change!